

CITY OF BELLEVUE
CITY COUNCIL

Summary Minutes of Study Session

October 15, 2001
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room
Bellevue, Washington

PRESENT: Mayor Mosher, Deputy Mayor Marshall, Councilmembers Creighton, Davidson, Degginger, Lee, and Noble

ABSENT: None.

1. Executive Session

Deputy Mayor Marshall opened the meeting at 6:02 p.m. and announced recess to executive session for approximately 45 minutes to discuss one item of property acquisition, one item of pending litigation, and one item of potential litigation.

The study session resumed at 7:05 p.m. with Mayor Mosher presiding.

2. Study Session

(a) I-405 Corridor Study

Bernard van de Kamp, Transportation Regional Projects Manager, said the I-405 Corridor Study was initiated approximately two years ago. Staff requests Council direction regarding the identification of a preferred alternative for Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) analysis.

Mike Cummings, Washington State Department of Transportation, said the I-405 corridor is one of the most congested roadways in the state, a critical component of trade and the state economy, and essential to the success of the Growth Management Program. A draft EIS for the I-405 Corridor Study was issued in August and public comments are due by October 24. The project team plans to select a preferred alternative in November.

Mr. Cummings reviewed four major alternatives, each of which contain approximately 300 individual projects:

1. High-capacity transit (HCT)/transportation demand management (TDM) emphasis
2. Mixed mode with high-capacity transit emphasis
3. Mixed mode emphasis

4. General capacity emphasis.

Mr. Cummings displayed a graph showing the average number of hours of congestion and person trips under each alternative. He noted that the projected number of transit and HOV users increases dramatically from 1995 to 2020 under all four alternatives. He then displayed graphs showing impervious surface impacts, acres of wetlands impacted, air quality performance, and the number of affected residential and non-residential parcels for each alternative. Preliminary cost estimates are as follows:

Alternative 1 - \$ 5.3 billion

Alternative 2 - \$ 8.6 billion

Alternative 3 - \$ 6.8 billion

Alternative 4 - \$11.3 billion

Mr. Cummings said issues have been raised regarding the amount of transit and TDM investment in Alternative 3. He said the preliminary preferred alternative, similar to Alternative 3, provides 1,700 van pools and requires approximately 8,000 parking stalls along the corridor. This alternative provides Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) with an expanded transit system, two additional general purpose lanes in each direction on I-405, and the widening of SR 167. Additional components include committed HOV projects in Downtown Bellevue, proposed HOV projects in Kirkland, enhanced HOV connections at SR 520 and possibly I-90, and all-day feeder/local bus service. Mr. Cummings listed the following transit centers affected by the project and noted that some centers might need to be expanded: Kirkland, Redmond, Overlake, Downtown Bellevue, and Newcastle. A 40 percent increase in park and ride lot capacity would be needed along the corridor.

Mr. Cummings described plans for a more automated HCT option in central core areas such as Downtown Bellevue and portions of Kirkland and Redmond, connecting to potentially different types of HCT service to travel across Lake Washington. He suggested this decision should be made in the context of the Trans Lake Washington Study and Sound Transit Phase II plans. A controversial aspect of the alternative is the future use of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe right-of-way. The City of Renton has formally objected to non-trail uses of the BNSF right-of-way in its jurisdiction.

Mr. Cummings said the preliminary preferred alternative would add two general purpose lanes in each direction for most of the corridor, except for one new lane in each direction in Downtown Bellevue in the area of the direct access project. He reviewed planned freeway connections, arterial connections, arterial improvements, and HOV projects on the north end of the I-405 corridor. The interchange at I-405 and SR 167 will be rebuilt to provide equal movement to both I-5 and SR 167 to eliminate the competing merging problem that currently exists.

Mr. Cummings said there are critical issues regarding salmon habitat along the entire I-405 corridor. The highway was built in the 1960s and 1970s and storm drainage facilities are not up to current standards. Mr. Cummings summarized that the I-405 Corridor Program is completing two years of cooperation to develop a vision for reducing traffic congestion and providing mobility on the corridor. The program is working to develop a balanced and integrated transportation solution encompassing roadway, transit, and environmental investments.

Mr. van de Kamp led City staff's presentation regarding the I-405 Corridor Program. Staff's work is guided by the joint interest statement developed by the Bellevue, Kirkland, and Redmond City Councils, which outlines the following priorities:

- Protection of neighborhoods and reduction in cut-through local traffic by improving the regional multi-modal transportation system.
- Addition of up to two general purpose lanes in each direction.
- Completion of HOV system.
- Addition of high-capacity transit and improved local transit.
- Enhanced transportation demand management efforts.

In January, Council endorsed Alternative 3 as the preliminary preferred alternative, which adds two new lanes in each direction on I-405 and a Bus Rapid Transit system. Mr. van de Kamp expressed staff's concern that shared use of HOV lanes by cars, vans, and buses could result in too much congestion. Staff has worked with the Trans Lake Study team, the I-405 team, and downtown stakeholders to determine that one additional through lane is needed to accommodate traffic for the next 20-30 years on I-405. It will also be necessary to accommodate an expanded SR 520 with potentially up to eight lanes.

Mr. van de Kamp noted that under the preliminary preferred alternative, there will be a decline in BRT and HOV reliability after 2020. Three options under consideration to ensure ongoing reliability are use of the BNSF right-of-way, a managed lanes approach, and increasing restrictions on HOV lanes. Managed lanes refers to techniques such as express lanes, restricted use lanes (e.g., freight, transit only), and toll roads.

Mr. van de Kamp said staff's recommendation for a preferred alternative is to reaffirm Council's position on Alternative 3 with the addition of a statement to preserve the BNSF right-of-way and to conduct further evaluation of the managed lane concept. He requested Council direction regarding the preferred alternative and a draft letter to the chair of the I-405 Corridor Program.

Responding to Mr. Noble, Mr. Cummings explained a fifth alternative presented by a group called Sensible Solutions. This option adds one general purpose lane in each direction on I-405 south of I-90 and some hill-climbing lanes and other minor improvements on the remainder of the corridor north of I-90. It includes possible rail service on the BNSF right-of-way as well as the completion of some HOV improvements contained in the other alternatives. Mr. Cummings said it is similar to Alternative 1, with one general purpose lane south of I-90.

Mr. Lee thanked staff for the presentation. He suggested that the letter to the I-405 Corridor Program should express Bellevue's support of Alternative 3 as well as additional items discussed by Mr. van de Kamp. He noted the benefits of Alternative 4 and wondered if elements could be combined with Alternative 3. He is interested in rail service between the Eastside and Sea-Tac Airport.

- ☞ Mr. Noble moved to approve Alternative 3 for the I-405 Corridor Program, as well as the additional priorities to preserve the BNSF right-of-way for future transportation use and to further evaluate managed lanes options. Mrs. Marshall seconded the motion.

Mr. Creighton expressed support for Alternative 3. Mr. Degginger expressed support for the motion and noted a tremendous environmental benefit to be gained from the storm water management elements. Dr. Davidson also supports Alternative 3.

Mrs. Marshall thanked staff and Mr. Cummings for their work. She will communicate Council's position to the I-405 Executive Committee in November.

- ➡ The motion to approve Alternative 3 for the I-405 Corridor Program, as well as the additional priorities to preserve the BNSF right-of-way for future transportation use and to further evaluate managed lanes options, carried by a vote of 6-1 with Mr. Lee dissenting.

Mr. Lee expressed support for Alternative 3 but noted that he still has unanswered questions.

Mayor Mosher thanked Mrs. Marshall for her work on the I-405 Executive Committee.

(b) Concurrency Level of Service Update

City Manager Steve Sarkozy opened the discussion about the City's traffic modeling and resulting concurrency level of service projections for the 13 mobility management areas (MMAs) in Bellevue. He said efforts to control and better manage traffic are working and the City is seeing a decrease in overall projected congestion levels.

Transportation Director Goran Sparrman explained that staff reviews concurrency level of service conditions on an annual basis. He noted that concurrency levels have significant policy implications for transportation and land use in Bellevue and the broader region. Mr. Sparrman defined concurrency as a tool to balance land development with funded transportation capacity, as required by the state Growth Management Act. Bellevue's Traffic Standards Code outlines Bellevue's concurrency approach, which is based on measuring volume-to-capacity (V/C) ratios at 104 intersections in 13 MMAs. A V/C ratio measures the degree of traffic saturation at specific City intersections during one hour or two hours in the PM peak period.

Mr. Sparrman clarified that concurrency is not a report on how traffic and transportation is actually working on the ground, nor does it represent a performance measure of the multi-modal transportation system. Concurrency calculates, based on a fairly narrow statistical approach, how the roadway component of a system will work in the future based on some very specific criteria that reflect approved land use projects and take into account funded CIP (Capital Investment Program) projects. Therefore, concurrency findings should not be interpreted to reflect current conditions on the street. Mr. Sparrman noted that the next State of Mobility report is scheduled to be presented to Council on November 19.

Mr. Sparrman defined peak hour factor, which is the ratio of hourly volume to peak rate of flow within the hour. This was modified from 0.95 to 1.00 to avoid exaggerating average traffic flow and to assume uniform demand within the two-hour PM peak period.

Mr. Sparrman reviewed the key information to be presented in tonight's discussion:

- How do observed 2000 traffic conditions compare to 1999?
- What are the projected near-term traffic conditions, given current development approvals and CIP projects?
- What underlying trends are suggested by the numbers?

Mr. Sparrman explained staff's approach. The first step is to document existing conditions which includes calculating V/C ratios using 2000 traffic counts and then computing area-wide average levels of service for the 13 MMAs. Two methods are used: 1) HCM 209 – federally approved document that specifies how to calculate two-hour average traffic volumes, and 2) Circular 212 – interim report released by Federal Highway Administration in mid-1980s that utilizes a one-hour peak volume to measure concurrency. The City has been using both analytical methods for the past year. However, tonight's report will address the approved policy methodology, which is the HCM 209, two-hour averaging.

The next step is to document concurrency conditions by estimating intersection V/C ratios, taking into account all permitted Bellevue development as of May 31 and CIP-funded roadway capacity projects. This results in an area-wide average level of service for the 13 MMAs throughout the City using both the HCM 209 and Circular 212 methods. Staff is able to evaluate and compare existing and concurrency conditions by analyzing area-wide MMA averages, intersection V/C ratios, and traffic volumes.

Mr. Sparrman displayed a table of existing conditions based on two-hour average V/C ratios for the 13 MMAs. V/C ratios improved in 2000 compared to 1999. Mr. Sparrman noted there are fairly significant daily variations in traffic volumes that are difficult to predict. Bellevue has actually experienced a flattening of the growth trend in traffic volumes during the past year, although volumes remain high.

In terms of overall trends, Mr. Sparrman said the rate of traffic increase has slowed along several local and regional roadways. Several intersection capacities have been improved through geometric and signal timing improvements. Also, traffic circulation has improved due to completed street and freeway interchange projects. A comparison of 1999 and 2000 Bellevue traffic conditions shows that some MMAs have worsened while others have improved. Overall, PM peak hour traffic shows a slowing to declining growth trend.

Mr. Sparrman said improvements in concurrency levels of service can be partially attributed to the following factors: 1) CIP project design has been accelerated over the past year, producing more complete design information for traffic modeling, and 2) carpool and transit ridership estimates have improved for the Eastside based on a recent survey. Key findings of the annual report are that Bellevue's intersections have greater reserve capacity now than previously forecast and overall concurrency level of service figures show a modest improvement (9%).

In closing, Mr. Sparrman said despite improvements, traffic congestion remains a major issue in the city. However, the current favorable report provides additional time for the City to find regional transportation solutions. Mr. Sparrman noted that the concurrency update is just one piece of the overall transportation situation. A broader picture will be presented in November's State of Mobility report.

Noting the time of 7:58 p.m., Mayor Mosher declared recess to the regular session.

The study session resumed at 8:32 p.m. Mayor Mosher opened the floor for questions and discussion on staff's concurrency presentation.

Responding to Mr. Noble, Mr. Sparrman said Figure 3 of the draft Concurrency Update Report shows percent changes in daily traffic volumes at various locations for the past three years. At Mr. Noble's request, Mr. Sparrman said staff will provide the actual traffic counts.

Mr. Lee expressed concern regarding the consistency of the methodology used to measure concurrency. Mr. Sparrman said all of the comparisons are based on the HCM 209 method and two-hour peak period averaging. He cautioned that the process is highly analytical and detailed using a range of assumptions regarding many traffic engineering parameters.

In response to Mr. Degginger, Mr. Sparrman said traffic counts are collected to reflect an average weekday.

Mrs. Marshall questioned whether this information is used to target neighborhoods potentially in need of traffic calming measures. Mr. Sparrman said traffic volumes and speed profiles are both key determinants in terms of prioritizing transportation projects. Mr. Sparrman described a pilot program to post signs in residential areas reminding drivers that they are in a neighborhood. The purpose is to discourage cut-through traffic and encourage drivers to follow posted speed limits. Mr. Sparrman said staff is also looking at incorporating similar messages in gateway treatments throughout the city. He said Bellevue is supporting the City of Newcastle's efforts to improve Coal Creek Parkway and thereby discourage the use of Lakemont Boulevard as a cut-through route.

(c) Updated Impact Fee Schedule with Trip Generation Rates

Mr. Sarkozy recalled that the City established impact fees in 1999 to help finance traffic mitigation efforts associated with new development. Laurie Gromala, Transportation Assistant Director, noted Council's adoption in August of the 2001-2012 Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP) as well as the Impact Fee Project List. City Code requires that staff follow up this action by presenting an Impact Fee Schedule to Council for adoption.

Ms. Gromala provided a brief history of the impact fee ordinance. In 1989, City Council established the Transportation Improvement Program, which provided for a long-term transportation plan and authorized the imposition of impact fees. At that time, Council directed that impact fees should not exceed an average of \$3 per gross square foot (in 1989 dollars). Impact fee schedules have been approved in 1990, 1995, and 1999 as each TFP update has occurred. The benefits of impact fees include:

- Ensures new growth pays its share of needed improvements.
- Maintains nexus between payment of the fee and receipt of the benefit.
- Provides predictability for developers.
- Reduces cost of analysis to developers.

Prior to the introduction of impact fees, developers were required to conduct substantial SEPA (State Environmental Policy Act) analysis and to negotiate with the City in order to agree on a cost for mitigation measures. Ms. Gromala said the Transportation Commission reviewed the TFP and impact fee project list from November 1999 to July 2001. Following Council's adoption of the TFP in August 2001, the Transportation Commission reviewed the proposed impact fee schedule and trip generation rates in September. Staff proposes Council action on the impact fee schedule, trip generation rates, and impact fee map on November 19.

Chris Dreaney, Development Review Manager, described how the developer share of project costs and the cost per trip are calculated. She displayed the impact fees area map and suggested updating the map to reflect the West Lake Sammamish annexation prior to Council action on November 19. She reviewed impact fee project costs since 1989:

	<u>Total Impact Fee Project Costs</u>	<u>Developer Cost</u>
1989	\$167 million	\$50 million (29.8%)
1995	\$108 million	\$17 million (16.3%)
1998	\$152 million	\$23 million (15.3%)
2002	\$167 million	\$29 million (17.2%)

Ms. Dreaney noted that the decrease in developer costs as a percentage of total project costs reflects the influx of regional traffic between 1989 and 1995. The impact fee for a single-family home in Bellevue is \$716-\$1,085, compared to \$764-\$2,834 in Redmond and \$966 in Kirkland. For office space, impact fees in Bellevue are \$1.28-\$2.32 per gross square foot, compared to \$1.66-\$6.14 per GSF in Redmond and \$2.07 per GSF in Kirkland.

In closing, Ms. Dreaney requested Council direction to staff to prepare an ordinance adopting the updated impact fee schedule with trip generation rates and updated impact fee areas map.

Mr. Degginger asked why impact fees for single-family homes vary in different areas of the city. Ms. Dreaney said the rates are based on the traffic model, the typical length of a trip associated with a single-family home, and impact fee projects in or near the area. Impact fees for single-family homes do not vary according to square footage. Responding to Mr. Degginger, Ms. Dreaney said Bellevue's method for calculating impact fees is consistent with nationwide practices.

Referring to the tables on page SS 2-19 of the Council packet, Mr. Creighton questioned how all areas of the city are experiencing exactly an 11.3 percent increase in single-family home impact fees. Mayor Mosher reasoned that the percent increase should vary according to various projects going on throughout different areas of the city. Ms. Dreaney explained there are two phases to the process. The first phase is the modeling which takes information regarding trip lengths and land uses and calculates a dollar per trip fee. This fee is then averaged across all impact fee areas. The second half of the analysis then incorporates national data regarding the number and length of trips for a single-family home (or other land use). The fee per trip is applied across the board, with varying trip lengths, for the different land uses in Bellevue. Mayor Mosher restated that it is impossible to end up with the same percent increase in single-family impact fees for each area of the city, based on the methodology explained earlier in response to Mr. Degginger.

Mr. Sparrman offered to develop a flow chart illustrating the process. Mayor Mosher suggested that if increases are going to be averaged throughout the city, then the base single-family impact fee should be the same for the entire city.

Dr. Davidson requested maps of both the city's impact fee areas and MMAs. He questioned the relationship between impact fees areas and the CIP and whether impact fees still meet their original intent. Mr. Sparrman said staff will provide additional information to clarify these issues.

Mrs. Marshall requested a map depicting all impact fee projects.

At 9:17 p.m., Mayor Mosher declared the meeting adjourned.

Myrna L. Basich
City Clerk

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